



Faculty of Applied & Creative Arts

**A CASE STUDY OF BRILLO BOX BY ANDY WARHOL
AS A WORK OF ART**

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**Degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Fine Arts)
2018**

**A CASE STUDY OF BRILLO BOX BY ANDY WARHOL
AS A WORK OF ART**

SIA SIEW FONG

**This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honors**

**Fakulti Seni Gunaan dan Kreatif
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
2018**

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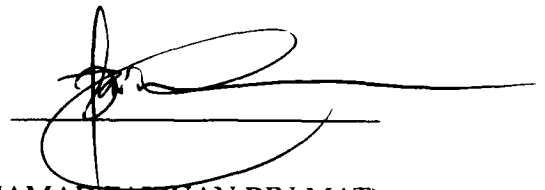
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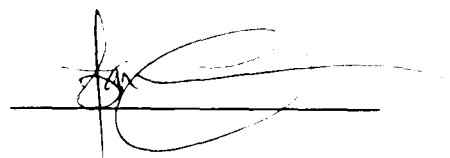
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Acknowledgement

The great gratitude I gave to God for giving me guidance and opportunity during my research and production of my personal work. For their never-ending trust and unlimited support, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents without whom I could not achieve studies.

Millions of awards to UNIMAS and the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts (FSGK) accept me as a college student and give me education opportunities. Thank you to the Dean of FSGK, Dr. Wan Jamarul Imran Wan Abdullah Thani and the faculty staff who assisted in direct and indirectly. Additionally, thanks to all the Fine Arts programmers on constructive criticism and advice in developing my quality and understanding in my learning and work.

Not forgetting the Fine Arts lecturer who has guided me in every learning and all the tutoring in this field especially to my supervisor, Mr. Mohamad Faizuan Bin Mat for helpful guidance, continual trust, thought- provoking suggestions and invaluable criticism throughout the implementation of this year's research and project.

Last but not least, thank you to my friend who are directly and indirectly in the course of my research and last year's projects on the aid and aspirations of me to continue the ideals to work. Thank you very much for sharing knowledge in the artistic insight that opens my mind and inspiration.

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Abstract

This research as a case study is to identify the work of Andy Warhol which is *Brillo Box* as an everyday object. “*Brillo Box*” is the ordinary, common and everyday boxes that can be found in grocery and hardware stores. It was not a single Brillo Soap Pad Box mounted on a pedestal. Besides, *Brillo Box* as an work of art are made possible by theories of art. Therefore, there is the question of this study that why *Brillo Box* as an everyday object can seen as the work of art. This is a qualitative study that uses face to face interview, participant observation and case studies to identify the *Brillo Box* as an everyday object and analyze the theory of art that can support *Brillo Box* as one of the artwork. In addition, the findings of this study also revealed the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* ensures the transfiguration of everyday things into works of art.

Keywords: *Brillo Box, everyday object, theory of art, conceptual art*

Abstrak

Kajian ini sebagai kajian kes adalah untuk mengenal pasti karya Andy Warhol yang merupakan Brillo Box sebagai objek setiap hari. "*Brillo Box*" adalah kotak biasa, biasa dan setiap hari yang boleh didapati di kedai runcit dan perkakasan. Ia bukan suatu kotak Pad Soap Brillo yang dipasang di atas kekaki. Selain itu, Brillo Box sebagai karya seni dimungkinkan oleh teori seni. Oleh itu, terdapat persoalan kajian iaitu mengapa Brillo Box sebagai objek sehari-hari dapat dilihat sebagai karya seni. Ini adalah kajian kualitatif yang menggunakan kajian kes, wawancara bersemuka, dan pemerhatian peserta untuk mengenal pasti Brillo Box sebagai objek harian dan menganalisis teori seni yang dapat menyokong Brillo Box sebagai salah satu karya seni. Di samping itu, penemuan kajian ini juga mendedahkan teori seni berdasarkan Brillo Box memastikan transformasi setiap hari ke dalam karya seni.

Kata kunci: *Brillo Box, objek harian, teori seni, seni konseptual*

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this research is to identify the work of Andy Warhol which is Brillo Box as an everyday object as a case study. "*Brillo Box*" is the ordinary, common and everyday boxes that can be found in grocery and hardware stores. It was not a single Brillo Soap Pad Box mounted on a pedestal but typically displaced in art museums. It were visually indiscernible from the real thing.

Besides, *Brillo Box* as an work of art are made possible by theories of art. We cannot always tell what is a work of art and what is not a work of art by just looking the appearance of the artwork. Therefore, there is the question of this study that why *Brillo Box* as an everyday object can seen as the work of art.

In addition, it is needed to have a context, intention and theory of art by producing the artwork. Therefore, analysis of the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* by Andy Warhol will be done. The implement of the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* to produce an everyday object as the work of art will be carried out.

To sum up, the qualitative base research methodology will be planned to achieve the research objectives. Books, articles, journal and online researches will be the main sources to identify the *Brillo Box* based on Andy Warhol. Face to face interview, case study, and participant observation will be carry out to analyze the theory of art that can support *Brillo Box* as one of the artwork. In addition, the findings of this study also imply the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* to produce an everyday object as the work of art.

1.1 Problem Statement

Brillo Box by Andy Warhol as a case study to investigate an everyday object can be seen as an artwork. According to Danto (2007) in *After The End of Art*, stated that a work of art is an artifact that is about something and that “embodies its meaning” (p. 126). From this research, researcher has to identify the question of how regard from the *Brillo Boxes* found on the shelves of supermarkets. Some might think that and point out the question on why *Brillo Box* can be an artwork or how can it be an artwork. As a researcher, I found that there is the important of the theory of art between the work of *Brillo Box* which has been emphasized by Danto (1964) that “It is the theory takes it up into the world of art and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is.” Thus, it is possible and why everyday object can be an artwork while it is just a simple object with the theory of art that can support *Brillo Box* as one of the artwork. It was not a single Brillo Soap Pad Box mounted on a pedestal. “*Brillo Box*” is the ordinary, common and everyday boxes that can be found in grocery and hardware stores. Therefore, findings of this study revealed the importance theory of art based on *Brillo Box* as everyday object and also seen as an artwork for me to produce the work of art as well.

1.2 Research Question

1. What is *Brillo Boxes* by Andy Warhol?
2. What is the theory of art that can support *Brillo Box* as one of the artwork?
3. How to apply the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* to produce an everyday object?

1.3 Research Objective

1. To identify the *Brillo Boxes* by Andy Warhol.
2. To analyze the theory of art that can support *Brillo Box* as one of the artwork.
3. To imply the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* to produce an everyday object as the works of art?

1.4 Scope of Research

The scope of the study will be focusing on the work of Andy Warhol which is *Brillo Box*. Based on this study case, researcher will identify the work of Andy Warhol as an everyday object and understand the theory of art by interpret and produce an artwork as well. Thus, researcher will apply the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* to produce an artwork.

1.5 Significant of Research

- To interpret the works of art as representation or everyday object in our daily life.
- To better understanding towards theory of art.
- To implicit the theory of art and produce an artwork.

1.6 Conclusion

To sum up, *Brillo Box* by Andy Warhol as a case study to investigate an everyday object can be seen as an artwork. Based on this study case, researcher will identify the work of Andy Warhol as an everyday object and understand the theory of art by interpret and produce an artwork as well. Thus, researcher will apply the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* to produce an artwork.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Literature review is an important part in a research. Information collection will help in the research during the process. In this literature review, there is more focuses on the work of Andy Warhol which is Brillo Box. Besides, the importance of theory of art that consider *Brillo Box* as an artwork of everyday object will be analysis through this chapter. Arthur Danto as the philosopher of art who defined the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* will also be analysis. Therefore, case study, face to face interview and participant observation of the information based on qualitative research will be collected in next chapter.

2.1 Brillo Box by Andy Warhol



Figure 1: *Brillo Boxes* (1964)

Artist: Andy Warhol

Size: 33.3 x 40.6 x 29.2 cm

Medium: Silkscreen ink and house paint on plywood

(Source: <http://artificialgallery.co.uk/artists/andy-warhol/brillo-box-pouf>)

Andy Warhol was one of the most influential and famous artist of the 20th Century. His notoriety is no accident. He was successful as a commercial artist when he exhibited stacks of hand-stencilled plywood boxes which is Brillo Boxes at the Stable gallery in New York in 1964. He achieved by creating art that was about commerce and treating his art like a commercial product. Besides, he almost single-handedly transformed both the art world and the public perception of art. In early 1964, Warhol decided to make replicas of grocery boxes. His assistants collected a selection of cardboard boxes from the supermarket and ordered several hundred empty plywood boxes from a local carpenter. Warhol and his assistants selected five boxes and created silkscreens to replicate the sides and top of each which is Brillo Soap Pads, Campbell tomato juice, Kellogg's corn flakes, Heinz ketchup and DelMonte Peach Halves by leaving the bottom blank. (Isabel, 2007, p.42). On April 21, 1964, Warhol's *Brillo Box* show opened at the Stable which look like a supermarket. Hundreds of boxes filled the gallery, stacked almost to the ceiling. The gallery even installed a checkout counter, where purchases were wrapped in plastic. According to Mattrick (2003) stated that Warhol's boxes do look a good deal like the real object. But you do not have to peer too closely to see the differences. They were made of plywood rather than of cardboard; they were silk screened, not printed; and also they were some large than cartons that stacked in a warehouse or supermarket. (p.135). For Danto (1992) said that it is difficult to distinguish the copy from the original. Moreover, he repeatedly spoke that although there are differences between the two objects, but still have philosopher said that being made of wood is what marks the work of art, especially when so many of the works of art in the world are made of paper. (p. 38)

2.1.1 Everyday object

As we know that *Brillo Box* always seems not distinguished from the supermarket and criticized by many people, audience and philosopher as well that why the *Brillo Box* is a work of art while it is just a simple everyday object. According to Rockwell (2013) stated that Brillo Box isn't suddenly art because Warhol puts a stacked of them in a museum. But by exhibiting them there he encourages us to make our every trip to the supermarket an artistic adventure and in so doing he has exalted our life. In the 1960s, Andy Warhol began creating the works of art that took inspiration from everyday objects, such as boxes of Brillo Soap Pads, Campbell's tomato soup cans and Heinz Ketchup. He brought attention to everyday visual products in the environment around us. As Savedoff (1989) explained that we can see an object as a work of art because of the ideas that hover around the surroundings and that ideas determine the direction of interpretation of the work of art that can be taken. Moreover, art object can consider as something that is not art, but status of art cannot be purely physical. In the twentieth century, works of art began to appear or as an objects of daily life and use through certain internal transformations in the history of art. (Herbert Read, 1984, p. 310). Besides, much of Warhol's art seems to play with culture of consumerism. As stated by Mathis (2004) analyses that works of art has become a big business same goes to the work of Andy Warhol, which is *Brillo Box*. As described by Warhol that business art is the step that comes after Art. He started as a commercial artist and became a business artist. He said that it is good to work and make money yet good business is the best art. With this recognition that art object cannot be identified simply with a physical object but emphasis on the importance of theory for the identification of a work.

2.2 The Theory of Art

As we know that *Brillo Box* seems to be a mere physical object like the *Brillo Box*. Since they look exactly the same, only a theory of art can explain why Warhol's *Brillo Box* is a work of art. In the grocery store, *Brillo Box* is just an object, but in the museum *Brillo Box* is a work of art, in virtue of such a theory. As Dube (1990) stated that anything visual can be called as art. "This is art" as a sentences become a convention. By judge and make art is required in historical knowledge. Some intellectual interest or strategic desire to see it further extrapolated and tested on mere institutional grounds. Art fades into "art theory". (p.125). In fact, for the greatest hypotheses from Danto stated that art required an atmosphere of art theory. Without the requirement of Artworld theories and narratives, his position becomes overly inclusive. (Carroll, 2012, p. 146). In addition, Heidegger (1962) clearly stated that the formulation of an art theory is necessary to define the artwork by consider both the subject and theorization of the object. Besides, Carrier (2007) also defined that *Brillo Box* as a work of art embodies by theory of art.

2.2.1 Arthur Danto

Brillo Box as a case study also had a tremendous impact on philosopher Arthur Danto who argued that art theory is so powerful as to detach objects from the real world and make them part of a different world or world of interpreted things. (Danto, 1981, p. 135). He suggests that it is theory that makes something a work of art, not some visible element but to see something as art requires something that the eye cannot catch. It is also the theory of art that takes it up into the world of art and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is. Without the theory, one is unlikely to see it as art. Thus, it is the

artistic theory with Warhol's boxes as an atmosphere, an Artworld and also a knowledge of the history of art. In fact, as explained by Danto regarding Lacertosa (2015) mentioned that art theory and Artworld are the same which means in discharging the theory, the Artworld is deleted as well and the possibility to interpret the artwork in its indiscernibility is irremediably lost. Moreover, Danto (1991) defines his Artworld as an institutionalized world made of historically ordered artworks and theories. It is possible to infer that Danto is interested in a definition of a theory that can justify the existence of artworks such as the Brillo Box by Andy Warhol as my case study.

2.2.2 Embodied Meanings

Something is a work of art if it has a meaning, is about something and if it embodies its meaning.

(Danto 2007a, p.126)

As a result of Danto's reflection work of art are embodied meanings, which implies that works of art have in common is to have a meaning and how they differ from other things is to embody their meaning. Danto argued that works of art are always about something and hence have a content or a meaning and secondly that in order to be a work of art something had to embody its meaning. According to Carrier (2007) stated that a work of art is something that 'refer'. It can be representation, like an old master painting, or an artefact linked to theorizing, like an abstract painting or *Brillo Box*. Many things that are not works of art are about something such as book on aesthetics or art history that are about art but are not themselves works of art. Thus, Warhol's sculpture presents that meaning in a more direct way, by embodying it. In *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* is that work of art are symbolic expressions in that they embody their meanings. The task of criticism is to identify the meanings and explain the mode of their embodiment. To see somet

hing art is to be ready to interpret it in terms of what and how it means. Therefore to be a work of art implies the existence of a piece of art criticism, which relates the meaning of a work to the mode in which it is embodied in the physical object that is its vehicle. Indeed the meaning of work of art coincides essentially with its *aboutness* and *embodiment*. In addition, In *The Abuse of Beauty*, there seems to be a certain shift towards the aesthetic aspects of artworks and their inflecting role in the embodiment meaning. Since artworks are not bare meanings, but embodied meanings, their material aspect must have some effect upon our sensibility. In fact, the ordinary boxes of Brillo are about something, namely *Brillo* and they embody the meaning they wish to convey by means of their design. (Rotili, 2010).

2.2.3 Aesthetic

The term of aesthetic derives from the Greek word for sensation or perception, *aisthesis*. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, it was widely accepted that the beautiful (aesthetic) belongs to the essence of fine (art) and the “artistic” was studied as one of the cases of the aesthetic. (Horvath, 2013). Formalism, structuralism and all thought of the aesthetic as the essential feature of art. It is because judgments about the art are judgments of taste. They can only be based on direct experience and embodied in statements operating with aesthetic terms. Therefore, they insisted that the aesthetic experience cannot be substituted with anything else. According to Freeland (2001) stated that for Kant explained the aesthetic is experienced when a sensuous object stimulates our emotions, intellect and imagination. The beautiful object appeals to our senses and its form and design are the key to the all important feature of purposiveness without a purpose. (p.14). Besides that, Danto (1981) defined that aesthetics does not mean that hardly touches the heart of art, w

high is certainly not the art that happens to be most beautiful. Thus, great art is probably not the most beautiful art, but we cannot state that it could not hold aesthetic value. Meanwhile, the aesthetic experience which the Brillo Box makes possible. Andy Warhol as the creator of *Brillo Box*, thought about the way to exhibit the *Brillo Boxes* by building them on each other but the sight was not satisfying as the edges of the cardboard boxes may dent or be pushed in yet not bringing out the perfect cube shape. He calculates exactly the aesthetic aspects of his works, which should definitely make us think not only through the appearance but also in theoretical context of work of art. In addition, Costello (2008) also mentioned that Danto as the philosopher, said that Duchamp's Fountain and Warhol's Brillo Boxes were externally beautiful as an objects. They would be merely 'freely' beautiful, that is beautiful in a way that is orthogonal to their meaning as works of art. Moreover, according to Carrier (2007) explained that American critics the disappearance of beauty in 1990s. They discussed that Brillo Box certainly is not beautiful and defined that good art need not be beautiful, but the pleasures provided by beauty are essential to everyday life. Hence, aesthetic does belong to the essence of art which constituted by art theory. The aesthetic quality of works of art could generically be called "artistic" which mean the aesthetic mediated by art theory.

2.2.4 Interpretation of art

Interpretation is important because it helps explain how art does this. Art acquires meaning in part from its content. In particular, Danto was interested in Hermeneutics which gave him the possibility to introduce the interpretation into his Artworld and more specialized context of the Artworld. Warhol creates work within a concrete situation which enables him to endow it with a certain meaning. When Warhol exhibited his Brillo

Box, it meant “This, too, can be art”, unlike the ordinary soap-pad boxes in a grocery store. According to Freeland (2001) described that interpretations as explanations of how a work functions to communicate thoughts, emotions and ideas. A good interpretation must be grounded in reasons and evidence, and should provide a rich, complex and illuminating way to comprehend a work of art. Sometimes an interpretation can even transform an experience of art from repugnance to appreciation and understanding. (p. 150). With Brillo Box, Warhol demonstrated that anything can be a work of art by given the right situation and theory. Hence, Danto concludes that a work of art is an object that embodies a meaning which is “Nothing is an artwork without an interpretation that constitutes it as such”. In addition, as emphasized by Mat. F (2013) that interpretation is a mechanism that can make an art community to be maturity and strengthen the thinking. Interpret a work of art requires a critical analysis and should be not merely descriptive comment. Besides, to “interpret” is to offer a rational construe that explains the meaning of an artwork. The most advanced interpretations are reasoned, detailed and plausible. They reflect background knowledge and community standards of rational debate. Furthermore, Youngentob (2009) also explained that good interpretation should establish a connection between the audience and the object of interpretation. Also with specialist interpretation that central to the communicative success of art and it also plays an important role in the education and training of new artists. Interpretation and critical analysis help explain art which is not just to tell us what audience think about, but to enable us to see and respond to the work better for ourselves as well.

2.2.5 Conceptual Art

In Conceptual art the idea or concept is the important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.

Sol LeWitt, Paragraphs on Conceptual Art, Artform, June 1967

According to LeWitt (1967) argued that expressionist art which requires rational decisions to be made throughout the process of an artwork's execution and conceptual art. He proposed that the concept determines what the artwork will look like. The idea, he writes, becomes "a machine that makes the art," as a logical operation that "eliminates the arbitrary, capricious and the subjective as much as possible. In addition, the conceptual in art also means an expanded critique of the cohesiveness and materiality of the art objects, a growing wariness toward definitions of artistic practice as purely visual, a fusion of the work with its site and context of display and an increased emphasis on the possibilities of publicness and distribution in broadest (Alberro & Stimson, 1999, p. 18). Besides, conceptual art emerged during a period of social, political and cultural upheaval in the 1960s. As a consequence, this period has been described in the terms of the 'dematerialisation' of the art object. It is recognized for its use of both text, ephemeral or everyday materials such as found objects, readymade,, photography, video, performance, documentation and film. Conceptual tendencies can be found in the 'anti-art gestures' of dadaism, constructivism, pop art, minimalism and fluxus. Its influence can be seen in performance art, installation art, public art, new media art and participatory art. Therefore, we could propose that conceptual art is the name for a broad tendency to shift the priorities for making, describing, thinking about, giving value to and distributing works

of art. Hence, Andy Warhol as the famous pop artist also a conceptual artist who created the "*Brillo Box*" same as conceptual artist, Marcel Duchamp who created "*Fountain*" had used conceptual form of art to produce everyday object as the works of art. Meanwhile, LeWitt also explained that conceptual art is not necessarily logical. The logic of a piece or series of pieces is a device that is used at times, only to be ruined. Some ideas are logical in conception and illogical perceptually. The ideas need not to be complex same goes to the work of "*Brillo Box*". It can be simple but successful convey the content of the artwork. Successful ideas generally have the appearance of simplicity because they seem inevitable. He also said that appearance of the work of art really does not matter such as "*Fountain*". It does not necessarily have to be rejected if it does not look well. Sometimes what is initially thought to be awkward will eventually be visually pleasing. It has to look like something if it has physical form. No matter what form will become, it may finally be produce and it must begin with an idea. Thus, it is the process of conception and realization with which the artist is concerned. The work of art can be perceived only after it is completed. To sum up, conceptual art continues to inform contemporary art theory and practice and has contributed to a revised understanding art, radicalizing modes of presenting, exhibiting and collecting art.

2.3 Conclusion

To sum up, there is more focuses on the work of Andy Warhol which is *Brillo Box*. Besides, the importance of theory of art that consider *Brillo Box* as an artwork of everyday object will be analysis through this chapter. Arthur Danto as the philosopher of art who defined the theory of art based on *Brillo Box* will also be analysis.